

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3801

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: AFL-CIO'S RESPONSE TO TUCSA'S INVITATION TO SEND FACT-FINDING MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA.

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AFL-CIO'S RESPONSE TO TUCSA'S LETTER OF INVITATION (REFTEL) TO SEND FACT-FINDING MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA. RESPONSE DECLINES INVITATION WHILE HINTING THAT AFL-CIO ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING IN FUTURE IF TUCSA WERE QTE TO ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUTONOMOUS INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OR FOUNDATION TO PROVIDE TRADE UNION EDUCATION FOR ALL ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIETY.

2. QTE JANUARY 28, 1975; MR. J.A. GROBBELAAR, SECRETARY GENERAL, TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA, P.O. BOX 5592, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, DIR SIR AND BROTHER: FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSION WITH YOU, RONNIE WEBB AND PAT O'FARRELL IN NY OFFICE LAST OCTOBER, AND RECEIPT OF YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 25, 1974, CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO THE QUESTION YOU RAISED. PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AFL-CIO WITH UNIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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AT THE MOST RECENT MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OF THE AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE ENTIRE MATTER, INCLUDING TUCSA'S REQUEST FOR AN AFL-CIO FACT FINDING MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA WAS THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED.

THE CONSENSUS OF THE COMMITTEE WAS THAT THERE WAS LITTLE TO BE GAINED ON EITHER SIDE BY SENDING A DELEGATION AT THE PRESENT TIME. THERE IS, SPEAKING QUITE FRANKLY, A RELUCTANCE TO BECOME TOO CLOSELY INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. HOWEVER, IT WAS ALSO AGREED BY THE COMMITTEE THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO EXPLORE WAYS AND MEANS OF BEING OF ASSISTANCE IN THE EFFORT TO EXTEND FULL TRADE UNION RIGHTS TO ALL WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH THE POLICY OF THE AFL-CIO AS STATED IN A RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE LAST CONVENTION, AT WHICH YOU WERE IN ATTENDANCE. IN KEEPING WITH THE DIRECTIVE OF THE COMMITTEE, I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST TO YOU AN IDEA THAT MIGHT FACILITATE THE BEGINNING OF A MORE ACTIVE ROLE WITH UNIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA BY THE AFL-CIO. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT TUCSA MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUTONOMOUS, H INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OR FOUNDATION TO PROVIDE TRADE UNION EDUCATION FOR ALL ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIETY. SUCH A LABOR EDUCATION INSTITUTE COULD INCORPORATE ALL THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS REFERRED TO IN YOUR LETTER IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH FROM THE END. I WOULD THINK THAT LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY COULDS BE BROUGHT TOGETHER, WITH TUCSA IN A LEADING ROLE, TO FORM AN ORGANIZATION TO COORDINATE EFFORTS INSIDE THE COUNTRY AND REQUEST AND RECEIVE REAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. ALSO, SUCH A NEW ORGANIZATION HOPEFULLY WOULD NOT SUFFER MATERIALLY FROM ANY STIGMA, WRONGLY OR RIGHTLY DESERVED, THAT MAY PRESENTLY ATTACH TO ANY OF THE GROUPS THAT MIGHT BE A PARTY TO IT. SHOULD YOU BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH SUCH AN INSTITUTE, WHICH WOULD HOPEFULLY CONTAIN AN AUTHENTIC AND RECOGNIZABLE BLACK REPRESENTATION, THE AFL-CIO WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO CONSIDER SENDING A MISSION TO ASSIST IN THE DETERMINATION OF WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO BRING THE PROGRAM OF THE INSTITUTE TO REALITY. I THINK WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER WELL ENOUGH THAT I NEEDN'T ELABORATE ON THE REASONS FOR MY SUGGESTING THIS APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM.

WITH GOOD WILL AND SOME HARD WORK I FEEL SURE THAT WE CAN FIND A WAY TO SURMOUNT THE HURDLES THAT CONFRONT US AND WILL BE ABLE TO PROCEED IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR REACTION TO THIS SUGGESTION.

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WITH BEST WISHES, SINCERELY AND FRATERNALLY, (SIGNED) ERNEST S. LEE, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS UNQTE. GUTHRIE

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